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plant is taken out and placed carefully on white paper, with a second sheet placed above it, and the plant pressed as before. When the plant is removed an almost invisible impression remains on each sheet of the two white papers. If only a uniformly colored impression is required, some black lead is sprinkled over the oil traces on the white paper. Care must be taken to distribute the black lead evenly in all directions. The result will be a capital representation of the plant in all its parts. If the natural colors of the plant are to be imitated, colored powders are employed in the same manner. To obtain fixity, a small quantity of finely powdered resin is mixed with the black lead or the colored powders, and the paper with the traces of mixed powder on ironed through a layer of blotting paper. The heat of the iron ought to be just sufficient to melt the resin, which object can be also obtained by holding the paper in front of the fire.

#### INFORMATION WANTED.

SIR: Will you tell me through the columns of your publication of any approved way of removing the printed reverse side from woodcuts of magazines, to be mounted and used for illustrations of books perhaps. I have tried placing the print upon glass face down, wetting the back with a fine sponge, and rubbing off a layer of paper and the printed matter with the finger, but the results are not satisfactory.

FERD. A. PRINCE, Newark, N. J.

#### UNAVAILABLE COLORS IN PASTEL DRAWING.

P. T. A., Newark, N. J.—Many colors are unavailable which are almost indispensable in other departments of art. Among these are burnt sienna, Cologne earth, Cassel earth, and bitumen. These and some others are of impracticable hardness. Some of the lakes, Naples yellow, brown pink, and others, are deficient in the quality of adhesion, or are wanting in body. There are, however, methods of utilizing some of them. Colors that change by exposure to the air or mephitic vapors are unavailable, as are also those which are affected by composition, as for instance Prussian blue, which is destroyed by bases containing lime; white lead, which is blackened by sulphurous exhalation; and vegetable lakes, which suffer by contact of lime or from the action of the atmosphere.

#### GROUND FOR ETCHING.

HOLLAR, Boston.—Rembrandt used the following as a ground for etching: white wax, 30 gr.; gum mastic, 15 gr.; asphaltum or amber, 15 gr. The mastic and asphaltum were pounded separately in a mortar, the wax being melted in a pipkin or earthen pot, and the other ingredients were added little by little, the whole being kept well stirred until thoroughly melted and amalgamated. The famous etcher Callot used white wax, 60 gr.; amber or asphaltum, 60 gr.; gum mastic, from 30 to 60 gr., according to the heat of the weather. The hotter the weather the more gum required, this giving the hardening quality.

#### THE BARBAROUS BOOKBINDER.

SIR: I recently came across the following protest against the English bookbinders in an old volume of *The Athenæum*. It has so much force when applied to the murderous manner in which our American binders cut down the margins of the books we entrust to them, that I hope you will consent to reprint it for their benefit and that of

A BIBLIOPHILE, Hartford, Conn.

"MR. EDITOR: If you think that *The Athenæum* is read or seen by any members of that class of ruthless binders, who delight in destroying the appearance of every pamphlet and book that comes into their hands, by trimming or ploughing its edges to the quick (and almost always crookedly), I beg you to insert this appeal to the monsters I have named, to desist from their barbarous practices, to learn to reverence the margin of a book, and never to take from it a hair's breadth more than is absolutely needful. The brutality with which the fair margins of one's loved volumes are treated by these mangling wretches with their awful plough-knives is shocking to behold. The curses of book lovers are daily heaped on their backs; but they go on running-amuck, heedless of remonstrance, remorseless, ever sacrificing fresh victims. Had we a paternal government, one might hope for due punishment of some of these offenders: one at least might be ploughed up the back, another up the front, as an example and a terror to the trade; but as this wholesome correction cannot unhappily be administered, will you give expression to the indignation of one among a million sufferers for years from these trimmers' savageries, and let them know what feelings their reckless cruelty awakens in many breasts? One of the largest houses in London has just sent me home fifty copies of an essay intended as a present for a friend. They have been trimmed and been ruined. Would that I could have the trimming of their trimmer's hair and ears, also his nose! I don't think his best friend would know him when I had done with him.

M. A.

"P. S.—Any one who will cut out this letter, and get it pasted up in any binder's or printer's trimming-room, will confer a favor on the writer."

#### PAINTING SUNSHADES IN OIL OR WATER-COLORS.

CINDERELLA, Brooklyn, N. Y.—Sunshades may be painted in either oil or water-color, which may be done either when the material is unmade, or on the sunshade after it is made up. The work requires great accuracy and care, and the design for it must be absolutely resolved on and worked out before tracing or transferring, as it is at best rather troublesome and any alteration would show like a blotch. Oil painting will not crack, and it is done on silk or satin precisely as on canvas or on any material. The paint must not be laid on too thickly, and it must be well ground. Very little medium must be used, or it will not dry quickly enough. The brushes requisite are small bristles for the broader and red sables for the finer touches. For pale or white grounds, water-color alone is best, the pigments being used as dry as possible, with no medium of any kind or any previous sizing. The brush is held rather upright, and the palest tint is laid on first. When this is dry, the second shades are added,

and so on until the whole is finished. Silk painting executed in this way is not so clear or distinct as when it is in oils or body colors, but it has the advantage of never rubbing or cracking. The painting, it will be seen, does not differ from the usual painting on silk and satin; and as with this, the work must be tightly pinned out on a board, with a sheet of tissue paper between, or at any rate stretched tightly in some way. If a sunshade is to be painted, it is therefore much easier to have the material cut out by a regular maker, and to paint it before it is mounted. In this case, if the design extends over more than one of the gores, it exactly matches with the next, and the material taken up in the seams must, therefore, be accurately marked out. The gores must then be tacked together by the marks, and the design either traced with a soft pencil on light materials or white chalk on black, or be transferred as if the silk were all in one piece. It can then be taken to pieces again, and the gores may be pinned out separately on a board, with small toilet pins about half an inch apart, always having the tissue paper underneath; or it can be pinned out in one piece. But if this is the easiest it is also the most expensive method of setting to work, as it costs far more to have the material cut out and mounted than to buy the sunshade ready made. With very delicate painting, however, the mounting might be equally choice, and the result unique. If the sunshade is already made up, unless the intending decorator is so accurate a draughtsman that his lines will need no effacement, it is better to transfer the outline from a carefully prepared design. The sunshade must be previously opened, and the handle tightly fastened either to the side of the easel or in some such other way that the whole circumference faces the painter; or if the inside is to be painted then the top must be secured in such a manner that it may most easily be got at; but as all this entirely depends on the design and its position, it is obvious that we cannot give precise directions for it. If the design is not to be carried from one gore to the other, a board may be cut of a triangular shape to slip inside each while it is painted, to which the folds must be pinned to keep them firm.

#### SUNDRY QUERIES ANSWERED.

HOWARD, Chicago.—The process by which oak is turned black, so as to resemble ebony, is as follows: The wood is immersed for forty-eight hours in a hot saturated solution of alum, then brushed over several times with a logwood decoction, prepared by boiling one part of best logwood with ten parts of water, filtering through linen, and evaporating at a gentle heat until the volume is reduced one-half. To every quart of this from ten to fifteen drops of a saturated solution of indigo, completely neutral, are added. After applying this dye, rub the wood with a saturated and filtered solution of verdigris in hot concentrated acetic acid, and repeat the operation until a black of the desired intensity is obtained.

KERAMOS, Newark, N. J.—"Silicon ware" is a new specialty of the Doultons at the Lambeth potteries. It is unglazed and non-porous, and is said to be particularly suitable for fancy flower-pots.

S. B. H., Cleveland, O.—Painting upon mirrors cannot be commended from an artistic standpoint. Painting the glass destroys the use of the mirror, and the reflective powers of the mirror destroy the effect of the painting.

## New Publications.

LAST DAYS OF KNICKERBOCKER LIFE IN NEW YORK. By Abram C. Dayton. New York: George W. Harlan & Co.—This is an entertaining account of men and manners on Manhattan Island half a century ago, written by a veteran New Yorker. The church, the theatre, the hotel, the restaurant, home customs and public amusements, all the elements and many of the actors in the social and business life of New York during the sleepy pre-metropolitan days, from 1825 to 1835, are depicted by a genial and intelligent observer. We quote his description of some of the household treasures of a typical Knickerbocker grandmother:

"Here and there, at prominent points on the pantry shelves, were displayed ancient family heirlooms in the crockery line, preserved as mementoes to recall some favorite set which had succumbed to the ravages of time. Grandmother took great pride in regaling our young eyes with an occasional inspection of these much revered 'penates,' many of them having been special transmissions from the far-off, dusty past. Their separate histories, as received from her lips, invested each plate, cup, or saucer with a consideration which bordered upon veneration, and we considered them as actual witnesses to a long line of worthy ancestry. . . . Grandmother's parlor will appear very indigent, common place, and perchance poverty-stricken, to such as have known no other than the richly appointed, luxurious drawing-room, now deemed so essential to comfort, and actually demanded by respectability. The stiff, high-backed, armless mahogany chairs covered with shiny black hair-cloth fastened to the ponderous frames by brass-headed nails, thickly set, all ranged at precise distances plumb against the wall like sentinels as a 'present'; the long, narrow, hard sofa, with seat so round, unyielding, and slippery, that it afforded capital coasting for youngsters, when the lynx-eyed guardian of the sacred domain was too busily employed in household duties to check the contraband sport; the rolls which for form's sake were styled pillows, and stuffed in appropriate niches at either end, as unimpressible as flint; the grand, best carpet of the highly-prized Lilly pattern, with its straggling vines and well-developed leaves of the brightest possible green, which would fail to meet the entire commendation of the eye accustomed to the soft, subdued substance of velvety softness at present in vogue; the high, broad mantel tree of gayly variegated Italian marble, which would be looked upon as a waste of raw material when viewed side by side with the elaborately chiselled resting-place for statuettes which ornaments the modern salon; the china vases mounted on pedestals and filled with artificial roses, as unlike nature as man could possibly make them; the tall, highly-polished silver candle-sticks, flanked by the inseparable snuffers and tray rubbed bright to match; the old-fashioned sideboard

with heavy stubby decanters filled with Madeira and Santa Cruz, and its silver baskets each day replenished with fresh doughnuts and crullers; the stationary pier tables at the extremities, special places of deposit for the family Bible, a volume or two of some well-authenticated commentaries and a copy of Watts' Hymns; the diminutive, thin-legged, wheezy piano, purchased during some paroxysm of thoughtless extravagance, but never opened save on the semi-annual dusting day; the indispensable rocking-chair and foot-stool; the portraits of grandfather and grandmother as they were supposed to have presented themselves in their far off youth to the artistic eye of some travelling painter; a worsted-work sampler, commemorative of some solemn churchyard reminiscence, or the more common Ten Commandments, the crowning effort of a much-beloved departed daughter, having been named, the ordinary array of decoration is completed, with the single exception that the bright green, inside Venetian blinds, so essential to completeness of detail, were for the moment forgotten."

THE INDEX GUIDE TO TRAVEL AND ART STUDY IN EUROPE, prepared by Lafayette C. Loomis and published by Chas. Scribner's Sons, is an excellent illustrated compendium of the information which every traveller of artistic tastes stands in need of.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED.

GREAT ARTISTS. GIBERTI AND DONATELLO. By LEADER SCOTT. New York: Scribner & Welford.

A PALADIN OF FINANCE. By EDWARD JENKINS. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co.

ESSAYS FROM THE CRITIC. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW. By F. H. UNDERWOOD. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co.

NO NAME SERIES. ASCHENBROEDEL. Boston: Roberts Bros.

THE VILLA BOHEMIA. By MARIE LE BARON. New York: Kochendoerfer & Urie.

#### SUPPLEMENT DESIGNS.

PLATE CLXXXVIII. is a figure design for a plaque or panel—"Apollo." If painted on china the work may be done as follows: Background, brown 108 and sepia, the white lines to be scratched with a knife; flesh tint, carnation and ivory yellow; hair, light yellow and brown; tunic, carmine No. 1, shaded with carmine No. 3; coat, light violet of gold shaded with deep violet of gold; sandals with leather strap and golden ornaments, brown and silver yellow shaded with ochre for gold; lyre, white (of china) shaded with gray; ornaments on lyre, light blue and green (sky blue) and apple green and chrome green; scratch the strings very straight with a knife when dry and then with a brush wash a light yellow (silver yellow) tint over them; belt, yellow ochre, with ornaments in brown 108; rocky seat, neutral gray and brown No. 3 bitume, with grass green and brown green for the grass; laurel crown, green (deep chrome and apple green) shaded with brown and bluish green.

PLATE CLXXXIX. is a group of decorative designs conventionalized from the English hawthorn and fully described on page 35.

PLATE CXC. gives some useful motives for embroidery and general decoration.

PLATE CXCI. gives four designs for plaque and panel decoration. If painted on china the directions are as follows for the two upper designs: Sky, ultramarine blue and sky blue; birds, brown and gray (brown No. 3 bitume, gray Nos. 1 and 2 and neutral gray); branches, green (deep chrome green, ochre, and grass green) and brown 108 in the shading. Lower left hand design: sky, as above; water, greenish blue and gray with some warm greenish tints for the grasses (ochre and chrome green); fish, green and gold (chrome green and ivory yellow); water lilies, white (of china) shaded with very light ivory yellow and gray; centres of flowers, yellow (silver yellow) shaded with sepia. Lower right hand design: sky and bird as above; morning glories, purplish blue (blue ultramarine and purple); leaves, green; frog, apple green and yellow (ivory yellow shaded with brown 108); ground, yellowish green, and background, greenish blue.

PLATE CXCI. is a series of classic figure designs by the sculptor Flaxman, suitable for china painting or general decorative work.

PLATE CXCI. furnishes examples of decoration useful for industrial art workers.

No room is quite perfect without flowers, and they are more or less valuable as they are turned to good account. Half their beauty may be thrown away if they are not grouped so as to aid each other. In arranging a group, consider not only the harmony or contrast of one with another, but which flowers you mean to be in full light, and which in shade, and group them so as to allow of some "concentration of effect." So also in placing your vase of flowers, select a light not too diffused, in which one part of the group shall be best lighted, and let that part stand where its background is in shadow. Attention to such points soon becomes habit, and the decorative value of your flowers is increased to a surprising degree.

THE bowls of the casters of easy chairs and sofas are made now of solid india-rubber or of leather to protect the parquet flooring.

A NEW kind of rush matting is being used in England for dados, wall hangings in general, and floor covering. "A border of the rush matting round a square of carpet, or a square of the matting instead of a carpet, may be used," says The Artist. One sort is stated to be useful for putting under carpets. The matting is of the natural color of the rushes, and the effect of the slightly different tinting in the rushes is good and interesting.